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Statement submitted by Self-Help Development Facilitators, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

Nigeria and the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Walking the Talk

Introduction

After 17 years of democratic rule, the culture of participatory governance and selfless service delivery remain elusive in Nigeria. An assessment of the MDGs revealed that many countries, including Nigeria, are moving forward, showing that setting concrete and collective goals yield results. Lack of accountability, weak political will, poor citizens' buy-in and participation, created shortfalls. Thus, citizens must be empowered to focus squarely on scaling up proven interventions to achieve the SDGs.

The Way Forward

The challenge hinges on how to build on the successes of the past while refocusing attention upon issues that aim to improve the chances of achieving the SDGs, if genuinely and properly implemented. It is necessary to concentrate upon the following areas:

- Upscaling innovative partnerships involving the private sector
- Mitigating systemic corruption by reinforcing the government-citizen compact
- Enhancing the continuity, quality, speed and efficiency of deliverables
- Institutionalizing citizen-driven monitoring and evaluation of projects

Action Plan

Sustainable development can no longer be left to governments alone. Non-state actors and NGOs have a critical role to play in determining the success of the SDGs by redirecting and reinforcing the overall trajectory of national development. In Nigeria, political leaders during electoral campaigns, make promises while paying lip-service to and sometimes lying about critical development achievements. Those in the non-profit sector should restrategize by putting in place interventions aimed at holding service providers to account. This should aim at ensuring the attainment of the SDGs by implementing the following action plan designed to walk the talk:

- Sensitizing, Mobilizing and Educating the Public: Ensuring that no one is ignorant of the goals through public enlightenment initiatives. Focusing attention upon government's strategies directed at achieving them, will serve to increase buy-in, ownership and commitment by all.
- Advocacy: A key role of NGOs remains public enlightenment. SDGs-related campaigns through public fora and research will make service providers become conscientious.
- Empowering Ordinary People: The five critical areas of the SDGs — people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership are central to the concerns and mission of most NGOs. Increased activities by NGOs in vocational skills development efforts, will foster poverty alleviation and promote the common good.

- Watchdogs for the SGDs: NGOs relate with citizens. They can design activities to improve the SDGs and put in place accountability mechanisms such as citizens' report cards on the quality of public services, thereby holding governments to account.

- Data Collection and Monitoring: NGOs possess the skills, empathy and credibility to objectively provide authentic feedback regarding project outcomes. Collecting data, monitoring performance by simply asking people to share their experiences of development-related issues will help achieve the SDGs.

Conclusion

Walking the SDGs talk demands an effective and efficient implementation of the above action plan. A mindset change and commitment to a paradigm shift through citizens' participation in governance, will enhance the actualization of Nigeria's development agenda.